

Bed bugs reported at field trip camp

Schools

Middle School parents notified of potential problem

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DUXBURY — Eighth graders at Duxbury Middle School may have brought home more than happy memories from an overnight field trip held last week in New Hampshire.

According to a phone message sent to parents Tuesday afternoon, bed bugs were found in cabins at Camp Cody in Freedom, N.H., where the entire eighth grade and teachers spent three nights as part of the Nature's Classroom program.

On its website, the program is described as "a unique educational experience for students and their teachers, offering the very best in environmental education."

Staff and campers were informed when they arrived at the camp there had been a problem, but that bedbug-sniffing dogs had been brought in and all the infested mattresses had been replaced.

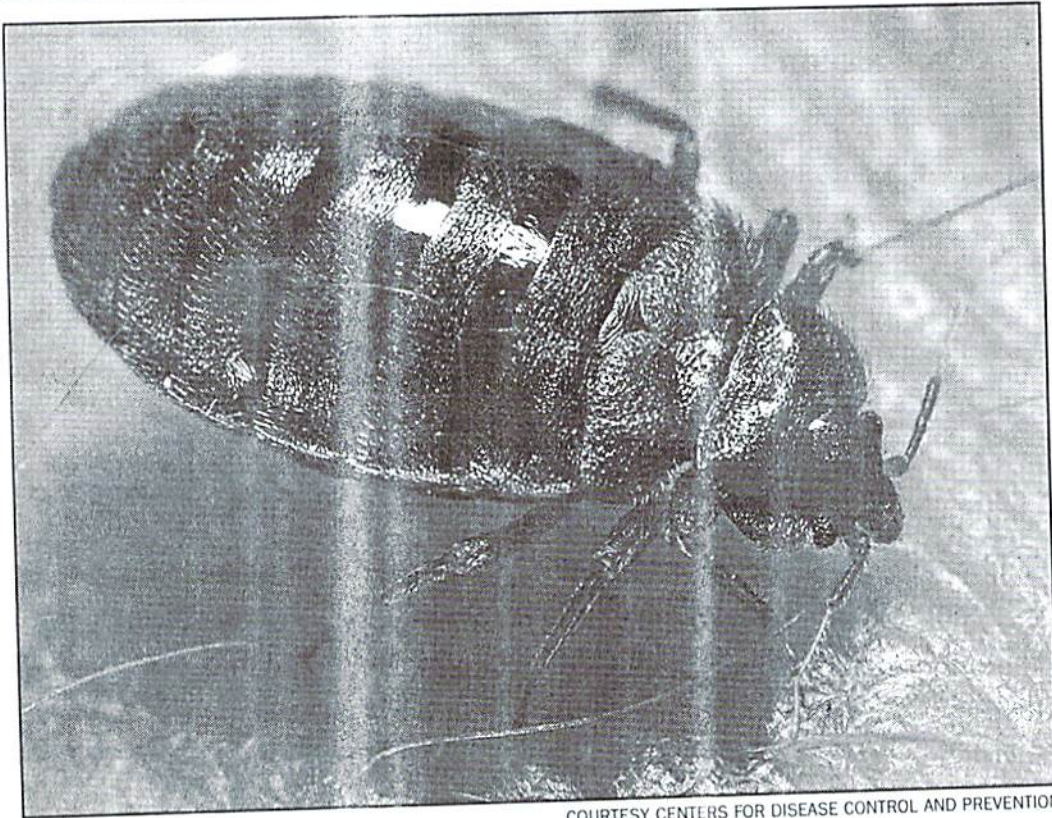
According to Superintendent Benedict Tantillo, staff and campers were informed when they arrived at the camp there had been a problem, but that bedbug-sniffing dogs had been brought in and all the infested mattresses had been replaced.

"All we know is they told us that once they arrived, they had an issue

the week before," Tantillo said.

Word that the problem may not have been eliminated came from a parent who learned from a news report that another group of students, scheduled to stay at Camp Cody after the DMS trip, canceled their trip upon being told of the bedbug problem.

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COURTESY CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Bed bugs were reportedly found at a camp DMS students visited last week.

Bed bugs found at camp students attended

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Some students have come forward with reports of bug bites, Tantillo said, but it hasn't been determined how they got them. Not many parents have called the school about the issue, he added. No staff members who went on the trip have come forward.

"I wonder why they didn't tell us," Tantillo said. He said the department would have to consider whether it would return to Camp Cody. Tantillo suspected the camp was afraid the school would cancel the trip if they had been told in advance of the problem.

Phillip Ross, director of Camp Cody, said that after a dog found a potentially infested mattress, he informed Nature's Classroom of the problem, with the expectation they would share that information with the school. Ross said the camp regularly checks beds and cabins for bed bugs.

A call to Nature's Classroom was not returned by press time.

"We're feeling that this is getting attention because we are checking, but we're glad we're checking," Ross said. He added that it was important for anyone in the hospitality business to be proactive regarding bed bugs.

According to the message sent by DMS Principal Blake Dalton, the problem was limited to three cabins. However, "I do not believe it would be wise to assume that if your child was not in one of these cabins that everything is OK," he noted, "as the students' luggage and bags were mixed together as we loaded and rode the buses home."

Information about bed bugs and how to treat an infestation has been posted to the middle school's website.